

# THE MUSICAL MAGAZINE.

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## THE TRIALS OF GENIUS.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN FOR THE MUSICAL MAGAZINE.]

[*Concluded.*]

The stranger, having walked up to the lady and saluted her courteously, addressed her in broken Italian: "Indeed, Signora, if you have no other embarrassment but this, I shall be happy to help you out of it, and to assist you this evening with all my power."

He spoke these words with such calm firmness, that the lady's fair features, which had exhibited, on the first mention of him, a smile of incredulity, then at his sudden appearance, a shade of embarrassment, now bespoke her surprise. Her beautiful dark eyes turned more attentively on the stranger, and seemingly not unwillingly on his good natured face.

"Did I not tell you, Signora Malibran, you might count on this gentleman; all your difficulties are clearly surmounted."

"I am much obliged to you," said the fair artist (for that she was in the fullest sense of the word) coldly to the host, and then, turning to the stranger, addressed him in elegant English: "Have I the honor to see an artist from noble Britannia before me?"

The stranger replied, smiling, in good English, though sometimes with a foreign accent: "Pardon, Madame, I do not belong to that great nation; my home is farther to the north; I am a Norwegian."

"A Norwegian," cried the fair singer, still more surprised, "there are artists then in yon distant, icy country!" and she added with a soft smile, "and artists of such high courage; for you do not withdraw your promise, I hope."

"You may have heard of my people only as of a nation of bold heroes of the sea, Madame, but it is another field that I have entered, carrying the bow only instead of the sword; but in my field, I do not shun the contest, and if you would not decline my services, I should be happy to be of assistance to so noble an artist."

A soft kindness continued to play round the beautiful features of the lady, while she replied with great earnestness, "But are you aware that you are to appear in the place of De Beriot? Have you heard him play? Or is his name known to you?"

The stranger self-confidently encountered her doubtful look, and said, "Although I have not yet been so happy as to meet the first violin virtuoso of France face to face, and to admire his performances, yet his manner is sufficiently known to me by his compositions for his instrument; and I may say, although I cannot compare myself to the first virtuosos, that I am not one of those pretenders to art, who have learned to draw out their roudades, like birds in a cage, and who travel through the wide world, repeating every where, day after day, the same things. I will engage to play the pieces advertised in the bill, and their difficulty will be a spur to me to do the best in my power."

"The more I listen to you, the more your confidence strikes me, but the undertaking is too important, to engage in it in blind confidence; to refuse your liberal offer would be as uncivil, as it would be indiscreet on my part to accept it, without the knowledge of my husband."

The young man answered with a bow; "I am fully willing, nay, I wish nothing more, than to give you, certainly one of the best judges of the art, a proof of my talent: you play the piano, no doubt; I will fetch my violin, and your husband may decide whether I am worthy to take his place for one evening."

"Let us do it then at once," said the lady, "for there is little time to lose." The youth, timidly offering her his arm, led her up stairs into the most splendid rooms of the hotel.

They traversed several rooms, until they came to a darkened one, where the French artist lay, wrapped in a morning gown, stretched on a couch, with his head bound up. His lady stated

briefly the young man's singular proposal for the evening, and his intention of making a trial now under his own eyes. De Beriot listened, slightly bowing, with incredulous looks, inquired the name of the stranger, and hearing the appellation of Ole Bull, hardly pronounceable to a French tongue, could not help smiling ironically, whether intentionally, or produced by the pains distorting his features.

Signing his lady to the piano, and pointing to his violin case, he stretched himself carelessly on the pillows, as though he did not expect any thing more than common. Meanwhile, the young Norwegian had taken up a violin, had tuned it without noise, and after drawing the bow once or twice as if to try it, had stepped up to the piano, where the singer had already seated herself. "And what shall we try, my noble northern champion? here is material enough for us," she said, pointing to a heap of elegantly bound music books that lay on the piano.

"I am satisfied with any thing that the good taste of my lady may select; please to look out a piece."

"Well, then, it is my turn to create a good opinion of my talents; and I choose my favorite author, and his grand Sonata in *A* minor; you know this chef d'œuvre, I suppose?"

The Norwegian nodded affirmation, and immediately the first chords rose, and the first movement gushed along. The sick French artist had buried his head in the pillows, in order not to suffer double pain, by uncultivated, rough tones; yet after the first notes, he already raised his head, and began attentively to listen; but when the two players proceeded farther and farther in this production of genius, when they unfolded more and more of its brilliant gems of art, he rose, surprised and unawares, more and more on his couch. His face gave back the expression of the piece that was performed; now listening with suppressed breath to the tones that fell dying from the strings, seemingly emanating from the lowest, inmost depth, and yet so clear, so distinct; and then with his heart beating, when the tones sprung more and more powerful from the bow, as though the strings were going to break, and the instrument to be crushed under the mighty hand. After the repetition of the first part, he had already risen entirely from his couch; and in the second, as though the sounds soothed his pains, he unconsciously approached the players; and after that tempest of bold ideas had ceased, De Beriot embraced the stranger artist, saying that he had

heard playing like that but of *one* man besides. The singer looked up to the two artists as in a dream; she thought it must have been a play of her imagination; that what she had heard could not be reality; while the young northerner blushed at the approbation, which, so long withheld or refused, he now received from two such competent judges. "Your mastership is proved," exclaimed De Beriot, "and as to that, you not only take my place worthily, but I must confess, you put me into the shade: the only question now is about some of my peculiar knacks, about execution in certain brilliant passages, about certain ways of bowing, to decide whether you can execute my compositions which are announced for the evening. But why is it necessary that you should play them? Play any thing that is in your hand, and you will be sure to delight your audience."

"The revered master gives me praise which I have not merited, but which I shall try to earn; yet I am the rather disposed to confine myself to the advertisement, as I am not wholly unacquainted with your compositions. There are the parts, and here the piano score; let us try." De Beriot pressed his hand, and went back to his couch; while the singer opened the books at the piano, still lost in her joyful surprise. Now the theme sounded, sweetly sung like the nightingale's warbling; and the variations followed each other, going off like brilliant fireworks, shining and sparkling, each in another form, in other figures, playing round the same subject.

The astonishment and the admiration of the Frenchman rose with each new variation; and when the piece was finished, he embraced the artist again, and assured him of his most unlimited approbation. "There is but one else who can play every thing, that is Paganini; and here is his youthful duplicate! How was it possible that the rough North could thus equal the luxurious South! No, I may retire; nay, I may go home; since such an artist has appeared here! I ought to be jealous; indeed, there is reason enough for it; but I cannot!"

The northerner was embarrassed by all this applause. "Pardon me," he began, "if my head feels giddy; if all this praise confuses me; hitherto I have experienced but coldness and neglect."

"Coldness!" interrupted De Beriot; "are the people mad?" and Madame Malibran added, "you will learn to know the good people of Florence here otherwise; I already imagine to myself their surprise, their enthusiasm, on finding that they have two virtuosos within their walls, instead of one."

Ole Bull answered with a thankful look, "The people of Florence will receive me as coldly as all the rest; the more so, since I shall appear for De Beriot, and together with his lady: what can the dead instrument do by the side of the inspiring voice, from such a fair mouth: where each tone has its own inspiring language, and each melody floats along like a fairy vision. I have heard Signora sing; but be it as it may, I will keep my promise."

"It will be high time, then, to prepare for our appearance: you will be kind enough to accompany me; I expect you within half an hour," replied Madame Malibran. De Beriot once more thanked him warmly, and the three artists separated; one to his bed, the other to his attic, and the third to her dressing room.

The unknown northern violin-player appeared at the appointed time, and accompanied the fair singer to the theatre: he led her upon the stage, amid the acclamations of the audience, when she sang; and played, when his own turn came, the pieces that were advertised for De Beriot with all his power, and developed all the sweetness in them that his bow was capable of. But even if he had only shown half the skill he did, or still less, the enthusiastic audience would have highly applauded him. The celebrated Malibran had introduced him; she had thought him worthy of notice; she had made him a star of the first magnitude. The host had already, before the concert, spread the report of the wonderful violinist, which had rapidly spread through the city, and led a great number more to the theatre, and had increased the excitement, and the applause. *Olbullo*, *Beriotto*, and Malibran, were in every body's mouth: they were the subjects of every conversation, of universal admiration. Ole Bull, thanking the two artists, carried his fame from Florence over all Italy, collecting new laurels in every new place; and then played also in the other countries of Europe; applauded, and praised, and acknowledged as a worthy rival of Paganini; being admired as a wonderful genius, where the audiences formerly had coldly yawned when he played. The fair singer, who has so early departed from us, had like a benevolent fairy interfered in his dark life, and raised it immediately to its zenith: she had been his *Walkyre* (northern goddess of victory) that had woven his triumphal wreath.

## INTRODUCTION TO MAINZER'S SINGING SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN.

[Concluded.]

### III. *Influence of Singing on Moral Education.*

After having shown the influence of singing on the physical education of youth, it remains for us to touch on its moral bearing, as its higher tendency.

The very first consequence of cultivation and refinement of the organs of the voice and enunciation, and of the ear, is the *excitement of musical talents*; for the excitement of the mental powers stands in the closest connection with the development of the physical organs. The *conception of the beautiful* is more and more cultivated; the germ of a more refined taste and feeling for art, is laid and nourished by it, in the child's mind.

To the tone the word is joined; to music, poetry: both the sister arts together accomplish what music alone cannot do. Yet neither the one nor the other must draw its inspirations from the higher circles of society, neither from the saloons, nor from the stage. Children's songs must, in word and tone, emanate only from the child's world, if they are to be understood, and not miss their object. In lively examples, in imaginative forms, every thing that is desirable to be impressed on the youthful heart, may be moulded into children's songs.

But another advantage, besides its being the germ of future esthetical and moral improvement, lies in the enjoyment of the moment. This is a most important assistant in the education of children. Since singing was introduced into the schools in Germany, they have generally gained a much more cheerful aspect; and the abstract sciences, which the children formerly dreaded so much, that they regarded the schools as nothing but prisons, are now taught them without difficulty. For the school is opened with singing, and singing closes it; and to avoid weariness in the other subjects of instruction, that of singing is interspersed, interrupting, with all its charms and recreations, the uniformity otherwise so oppressive.

The elevation of divine worship, as well in churches as in the domestic circle, where it is so often heightened in Germany by



singing, is another consequence of this general instruction in the art. To the musical education, however incomplete, being so general as it is, may be traced the whole secret, why the Germans as a people devote their whole heart to the art, and why they are considered by all the other nations so preëminently a musical people.

The German's organ of voice is pure ; he has made himself familiar with the first principles of music, from his very first elementary instruction, while learning the alphabet ; he improves every opportunity for further cultivation ; he hears singing every where ; he hears good models ; he joins with them himself ; in all the situations of his life, in all dispositions of his mind, in social circles as in solitude, every where, at home and abroad, singing is his faithful and inseparable companion.

#### IV. *Influence of Singing on the Health.*

One of those prejudices, which most hinder the general introduction of singing into schools, and often prevent it altogether, is the opinion which is so frequently met with, that singing is detrimental to health, in the tender age of childhood ; that it produces complaints of the chest, spitting of blood, inflammation of the lungs, and other evils of the kind. This opinion is very general in France, and is one of the chief reasons which have hitherto prevented the general introduction of singing into the public schools there. There was a time, when the same opinion prevailed in Germany, particularly among mothers of the higher classes. This time has passed away, and there is at present but *one* voice about it ; for the most critical examination on the part of governments, and the repeated experiments on the part of parents, have shown it to be a mere prejudice ; and the experience of many thousands has chased this prejudice forever out of the country.

On the contrary, instead of thinking singing detrimental to health, it is now admitted that it is a good means of cultivating and strengthening all those parts of the body, which are exerted by it.

Every exercise, mental or bodily, strengthens mind and body, in the measure in which either is exerted. By daily exercise the understanding gains in knowledge, the heart in warmth, the soul in vigor and power ; and the muscles of the body are strengthened, when they are exerted. It will be very soon experienced, when singing is exercised, that besides the cultivation of the voice and ear, all those parts of the body which have influence on the wind-

pipe and the lungs, are gaining from day to day in strength and pliability. *Respiration* is changed in singing from a natural state to an artificial one; the object is to economise the breath, and to make it go further.

For in speaking, it is already of importance to pronounce periods consisting of different phrases, so that their meaning, by observing the different interpunctuations, appears distinctly given; and in the language of tones, where the periods are more extended, where the interpunctuations are therefore more separated, and where there is withal more consumption of voice and breath required, this is of still greater importance, in order not to interrupt the meaning by taking breath at the wrong place, which would often altogether spoil the music.

For these reasons, taking breath cannot be arbitrary in singing, that is, it cannot always be done when it is naturally required: but the breathing must be well measured; it must be artificial.

Any one, that will carefully follow the instruction of a child from the first lesson, even for a short time only, will be convinced how soon the breath gains in duration by practice. How soon in the beginning the little breath of a child is spent! A crotchet or quarter note is too much for it to hold out. Two in succession use up all its store of breath; it gets tired without having exerted itself: but how soon this embarrassment vanishes. To breathe anew at every crotchet appears tiring to the child: it sings two, three, four crotchets, without new breath; and by-and-by whole measures, in quicker or slower movement; and the lungs of a child thus trained are often more powerful than those of full grown men.

Over-exertion of this kind, however, certainly affects the health; excess being always an evil. But on the other hand, it would be very wrong, if the cause of all the complaints of the chest and of the lungs in pupils, was laid at the door of singing; there are thousands of men that suffer in the chest and lungs, spit blood, &c., without ever having attempted to sing.

By moderate exercise, and a judicious system of singing, even the faults of weak constitutions may in time be removed, and the nerves and organs that operate on the chest and lungs may be strengthened.

But to this end it is necessary that singing should be begun in early life, in the years of childhood, when all the organs are tender and flexible. Instruction in singing, begun later, is more wearying and fatiguing, and during the time of the changing of the voice, is decidedly detrimental to health.



# BURNING OF THE ITALIAN THEATRE ROYAL, AT PARIS,

ON THE NIGHT OF THE 14TH OF JAN. 1838.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE GAZETTE MUSICALE.]

The wretch, who, in the space of a few hours, has destroyed one of the three lyric theatres of the capital, has deeply afflicted us, as well as all the friends of the musical art : but, before giving to our readers the exposé of the authentic details which we have collected relative to this fatal event, we are going to ask them to throw a glance backward upon a succinct history of the Italian Theatre, from its importation into Paris down to our days : and this retrospective recapitulation will make them feel, in a still more lively manner, how cruel to artists in particular and the public in general, is the destruction of that stage, upon which the brilliant and profound thoughts of Mozart were still shining with so much splendor, two hours before the conflagration whose fatal consequences we deplore.

The Italian music was heard for the first time in Paris, in 1645, through the exertions of Cardinal Mazarin, who caused to be represented, at the palace of Petit-Bourbon, *la Festa teatrale della finta Pazza*, a sort of embryo opéra. The score, written by Giulio Caccini, obtained much success, owing particularly, to the execution of the Italian singers, the brilliancy and breadth of whose style was not even thought of at this epoch in France.

In 1647, the *Orfeo e Euridice* of Claudia Monteverde was represented at the Palace Royal, before all the court of Louis XIII. This time, the dramatic action had more of regularity ; and the theatre, planned by the care of the marquis of Sourdeac, presented an effect then wholly unknown, that of the change of scenes, so common at the present day upon our humblest stages.

Thirteen years later, that is to say, at the period of the marriage of Louis XIV, in 1660, the *Ercole amante* [Hercules in love], of Emilio Cavaliere, was represented before their majesties, by singers who had been expressly brought from Italy. This serious opera, still better conducted than the two preceding, gave also, for the first time, a prologue, a kind of lyrical preface, which Lully afterwards carried to its highest perfection. But the Parisian public, still too little advanced in music to comprehend the various and ele-

gant form of Italian melody, was not admitted to enjoy the lyric spectacle to which the court treated itself, and consoled itself with applauding, at the Royal Academy of Music, the nanny-goat airs of Cambert, the only distinguished musician which France possessed at that epoch; and the Italian singers recrossed the Alps, to find in their native country a bluer sky and auditors worthy to hear them.

It was not till 1754, that a troop of Italian singers came into France, to let people hear the buffa operas of Pergolese, Rinaldo and Jomelli.

The representations of the Italian company obtained so much success, that the administration of the Royal Academy of Music trembled; and they had such an influence upon the court of Versailles, that a royal ordinance was issued to shut up the hall of the faubourg St. Germain.

A skilful translator, the Castil Blaze of his time, seeing that the public tasted with delight the Italian melody, set himself to the work; and soon, instead of the *Serva padrona*, the Parisians applauded the *Servante maitresse*, of Favart; so that the ordinance, which banished the Italian troop, only exiled in fact the ultramontane singers and their euphonic dialect.

Many other buffa operas were arranged for the French stage, and the *Italian Comedy* was about to be established in Mauconseil street, upon the spot where the Halle-aux-Cuirs was afterwards built, under the reign of Louis XVI. But the French composers having taken for their model the translated Italian scores, soon Montigny and Philidor wrote, in imitation, original operas in French; and Grétry, their brilliant rival, succeeded in carrying the prosperity of the Comédie-Italienne to its apogee. A fact worthy of remark is that Duni, an Italian Maestro, having come to France towards the latter part of the eighteenth century, chose rather to write his operas, so simple and genuine, in French than in Italian. Besides, the study of the Italian language, so fashionable under the administration of Mazarin, was, in 1760, generally neglected by good Parisian society; and the singers from across the mountains no longer came to Paris, except to sing either in the saloons of the nobility, or at the *Concerts spirituels* which Danican Philidor, brother of the celebrated composer and chess player of that name, had founded at the Tuileries, in the year 1725.

The Comédie-Italienne, which was no longer Italian only in name, was united towards the close of the last century with the

Opera Comique; and if from that moment the execution of the French scores was more perfect, it is not less true that the composers lost by this union the noble emulation which previously kept them in breath; for, before this amalgamation of the two secondary lyric stages, a sentiment of rivalry, generous indeed, excited the composers for the Comédie-Italienne and the theatre Feydeau, to merit each more and more the favor of the public; and it is to this musical competition, a competition which enabled many more composers to show themselves, that we owe Cherubini, Kreutzer, Le Sueur and Mehul, each of whom wrote an opera with a similar title. No one is ignorant that Kreutzer and Cherubini reckon each a *Lodoiska* among their lyrical productions, and also that Mehul attempted, but without success, to *re-write* the *Cavern* of Le Sueur.

The first wars of the republic could not fail to drive the Italian singers from the French soil; but Napoleon having made them our fellow countrymen by his sword, they left the departments of the *Tiber* and the *Arno* to come and charm that of the Seine; and in 1810, the Odéon took the name of *Theatre of the Empress*, and offered them a brilliant asylum.

Under the restoration, the Opera Buffa left the faubourg St. Germain, to instal itself at first in the hall which has just been burned, and afterwards in the pretty but small hall of Louvois, then near the Royal Academy of Music; and it was not till 1825, and owing to the munificence of king Charles X., that the theatre Favart was definitively granted to them. The civil list purchased this hall of M. de Lamarre, the proprietor, for the sum of 700,000 francs. The interior repairs of the hall cost the house of the king more than a million besides. The government of Louis Philippe has continued the work of restoration, and with the aid of the legislative chambers, a supply of 70,000 francs is granted each year to the present administration of the royal Italian theatre, which, on account of the departure of its principal singers to England, wisely decided that the series of representations, fixed at the number of eighty-two a season, should take place only from the 1st of October to the 31st of March, inclusive.

There were eight years that the talented association of Messrs. Robert, junior, and Severini, directed with talent and success the Theatre Italien, when the recent conflagration has arrested their enterprise at the most prosperous moment, has reduced to the

deepest distress a crowd of artists and honorable employés, and, what is more lamentable, has dissolved this association of two praiseworthy men, by causing the violent death of the honorable Mr. Severini.

But let us repress still for a while the just regrets which the death of this good man gives us, to resume our character of historian. On the 14th of January, 1838, was given, as extra, at the hall Favart, a representation of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Never had this ravishing music produced so much effect : the greatest part of the principal pieces were encored : it seemed, in fine, as if the public had then a presentiment of the misfortune which was threatening to deprive them, for a long time perhaps, of hearing this German masterpiece. The severity of the cold was the indirect cause of the conflagration, since it is attributed to the stove funnel of the artists of the orchestra, which, heated to redness, must have set fire to the wardrobe, through the midst of which it passed. About one o'clock in the morning, that is, two hours after the audience had retired, the fireman on service in the theatre, perceived a strong smell of smoke, and repaired to the place from which it emanated ; but he was already too late ! the fire had gained the curtains of the stage, and in less than ten minutes it was all on fire. In spite of the most prompt assistance from without, the fire could not be got under, for want of water ; in fine, at a quarter before two, the roof of this magnificent edifice fell with a crash into the furnace which had undermined it ; and at the same moment, the sky reflected a bright light, which gave the soul a mingled impression of fright and sadness. Until then it was hoped that the twenty and more persons employed and lodged in the theatre, had escaped the imminent danger which threatened them ; but the consternation of the artists, who came to bring the assistance which was required of all good citizens, was extreme, when they learned the death of Mr. Severini, the manager of the Theatre Italien.

[Here follows a short biography and eulogy of this gentleman, and a few other particulars, which we omit, as not being of sufficient interest to our readers. *EDS. MUS. MAG.*]

The hall now in ruins was built in 1781, after the designs of the architect, Heurtier ; and it passed, with reason, for the most elegant and most sonorous of all the musical halls of the capital.

## THE ORATORIO OF DAVID.

BY THE CHEVALIER SIGISMOND NEUKOMM.

The Oratorio of David, by the Chevalier Sigismond Neukomm, has been performed by the Handel and Haydn Society this season for seven successive Sunday evenings, and always to good houses; meeting with the same success which it has always had, since it was first brought out here. We may therefore presume that most of our musical amateurs have improved some of the many opportunities, now and heretofore offered them by this Society and by the Boston Academy of Music, to hear this masterpiece of musical genius; and that our readers will find themselves sufficiently interested, to justify us in devoting to it a full and critical article. We have the less hesitation in doing so, as this is the most important new composition of the kind, that has been brought out here for years. Haydn's Creation has grown up with us from our childhood like a bosom friend. Every year brought it again; and though every year we hailed it with pleasure, yet it has lost the charm of novelty. Handel's Messiah is almost too mighty for us to undertake, or to enjoy long. Mendelssohn's St. Paul, on the single occasion when it was offered here, was not understood, but was regarded as too scientific. A. Romberg's beautiful compositions which have been brought out here, such as the Song of the Bell, the Power of Song, the Harmony of the Spheres, are of too quiet a character to produce excitement. Three Oratorios brought out in this country by the composers themselves, did not prove of permanent general interest, viz., Mr. Horn's Remission of Sins, from its unfortunate text, requiring constant and almost endless recitatives; Mr. Zeuner's Feast of Tabernacles, from its too great length, though an elaborate and scientific composition; and Mr. Russell's Sceptic, from its intrinsic demerit, being merely a patchwork of Rossini's opera airs. But the Oratorio of David, ever since its first appearance here, is brought forward every year, and every year produces new interest and excitement.

The great success of this Oratorio is in itself a sufficient proof of its merit; and yet, if we apply to it the standard of the Oratorio, as laid down by the first great creator of this species of music, Handel, we must confess that it has not enriched this style of composition; nay, it has rather somewhat retrograded from its original purity and high character. For, while the Messiah has not the slightest tinge of the secular, David stands obviously nearer to the stage than to the church. But in order fully to appreciate its merits, we must take into consideration the object for which it was composed. It was

written for one of the great English Musical Festivals; exhibitions, not for the glory of the church, but for the glory of the art. Neukomm had to write for the greatest singers and the greatest instrumental performers, that England could boast of or command. They all wanted to shine; they all wanted *effect*; and if we take it for granted that this was the object for which he wrote, we cannot but admire his genius, in making use of all the means which the art affords, and all to the best advantage. We cannot but admire his spirited conception of the poem, his rich combinations, his striking contrasts, his pompous orchestral accompaniments, and his characteristic instrumental solos.

He was greatly aided by the extremely happy selection and composition of the poem, which gave him a variety of interesting situations and combinations of feeling, without trammeling his imagination by too numerous details. The poem guides the hearer to the music, for a full development of the various contending feelings.

Before entering upon an analysis of this Oratorio, we shall offer some general remarks upon its performance here. It was never brought out here in its full force, such as the author designed it; and it is impossible that it should be done; for we neither have a place sufficiently spacious, nor can we command a Choir and Orchestra large enough. On these two last points, both the Handel and Haydn Society and the Academy, labor under defects sufficient to prevent that degree of effect, which might otherwise be given to a piece by the means which they actually possess. Neither Choir nor Orchestra are ever rightly balanced. In the former, the male voices predominate over the female; and the Alto in particular is almost always deficient in numbers. In the Orchestra, the stringed instruments are altogether smothered by the wind instruments. In well regulated Orchestras in Europe, the former amount in number to at least four times that of the latter, and for such proportions the composers write their orchestral music. Here we seldom find more of the former than of the latter. In the Handel and Haydn Society, for instance, there are eleven stringed instruments to fourteen wind instruments, of which latter seven are brass,—a most outrageous disproportion, and in itself enough to spoil the true effect of a piece.

Another great and general fault, in our larger performances, is the want of unity in purpose and feeling. In this point of view, the Orchestra here stands in the same relation to European Orchestras, as that in which ancient warfare stands to the modern art of war. When the ancient Grecian or Roman armies met their



antagonists in the field, every individual warrior attacked an individual enemy, and after he had dispatched him, he attacked another, until he was either slain himself or remained conqueror on the field. In our times, each army attacks the other as one body; and even small detached corps always endeavor to act in concert with the main body, and never lose sight of its plan of operations. The application is easily made. Here every singer and instrumental performer goes through his part as well as he can, without any other connection with the others and with the whole, than that of time. He makes little effort to enter into the spirit of the whole, or to make his part blend, and as it were melt in, with the others: neither does he try to play or sing to the principal part so as to heighten its effect. But, instead of this, every one is too ready, not to say earnest, to make his particular part as conspicuous as possible; and many times seems too willing to accomplish this, sometimes by playing louder than the rest, and sometimes by putting in extra notes and graces or shakes.

We will, in connection with this last remark, mention another error. In practical use in our performances here, there are but two degrees of loudness, the *piano* and the *forte*. Both are too loud: the *piano* is seldom less than *mezzo forte*, and the *forte* is constantly *double forte*. All the intermediate shades of *mezzo forte*, *crescendo*, *decrescendo*, *pianissimo*, and the interpunctuations of *rinforzando*, *sforzando*, &c., are wholly lost; when nothing but the exact and uniform observance of these, by every member of the orchestra, can give to full orchestra music its proper character and true charm.

The difficulty lies in the want of elementary studies, and this is a defect from which even professors are not exempt. Nothing but regular practice of the scale in long tones, can give that command over both instrument and voice, which enables it to execute every shade of *forte* or *piano*. The object in attention to music as an art, even with the amateur, must be improvement; for if he does not find enjoyment in this, but wishes merely to kill the idle hour, or gratify a kind of morbid sensibility to mere sounds, his practice is no better to him than playing at cards, or any other idle amusement. Make improvement the constant object; devote a regular portion of the time which is given to music to practical exercises, taking care to practise in the right way; and whenever you perform any piece, study as far as possible to bring life and soul into it; and you will very soon find your enjoyment of music increased an hundred fold.

Thus prepared ought every individual to come to his duty, who is

to take part in the performance of any great work like David. And even then it requires a great many rehearsals : for in these every effect that is to be brought out must be explained ; every fault must be pointed out and corrected : in short, the Oratorio as one whole must be studied by Choir and Orchestra as one whole, under the direction of the conductor. This is never done here. The separate divisions, choruses and solos, are practised by themselves ; but one rehearsal with the Orchestra must generally suffice, and in it each one is usually left to find out of himself the best method of treating his part. This is a great defect.

We come lastly, however, to one not less important,—the want of unity in the conducting. A Conductor, who, with the score before him, is able to take the whole direction of both Choir and Orchestra ; who is exact, decided and firm in giving the time ; who is able to read the score with sufficient accuracy and ease, to be able not only to point out where the parts are to come in, but to detect immediately any error or irregularity in any of the parts ;—a Conductor with these qualifications is absolutely necessary, if we aim at any tolerable degree of improvement. There can be no unity where the Conductor governs the Choir, and the leader the Orchestra ; most certainly not, unless both are entirely certain of their parts. Besides, we have too few violins to permit us to spare the leader from his instrument ; and he must therefore mark the time by stamping with his foot, which is a most unpleasant accompaniment.

All the beating of the conductor, however correct, will still avail nothing, unless both Choir and Orchestra learn to look up from their books, and keep an eye on his motions. This must be constantly done, or the office is useless.

We here distinctly disclaim any reference, in the preceding remarks, to the Handel and Haydn Society in particular, or indeed to any other institution. Our remarks apply equally to all performances of the kind which we have yet heard here ; and are intended not as finding fault, but as pointing out existing errors and showing the only means by which they may be remedied ; a consummation which no one would hail with greater pleasure than ourselves. We have made these remarks in connection with this Oratorio, because it is the most important work of the kind that has been performed here this season, and therefore furnishes, by its importance, the most suitable occasion for them.

The analysis of the Oratorio we must postpone to our next number.